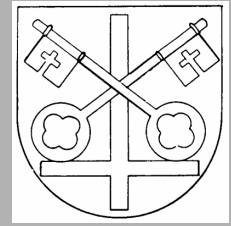


# CROSSED KEYS



ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

DECEMBER 2008

Dear St. Peter's Church Family,

The word Advent stems from the Latin word *adventus*, which means, coming. As we approach the celebration of the Lord's coming to earth, it is appropriate that we do so with an appropriate mindset. The gospel writers quote the prophet Isaiah when describing the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah writes:

A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

The "wilderness" is a place that is uninhabitable, even uncivilized. The prophet advocates that in the wild, a highway be constructed: a road suitable for the presence of the Lord. John the Baptist fulfilled this prophecy when he came and preached a message of repentance for the Jews, just prior to the onset of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is "the glory of the LORD" and in his coming the people of Israel saw that glory and beheld the very creator of the universe, himself.

For us, the wilderness takes on another meaning. In the book of Revelation Jesus states, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (3:20). The door is the door to our heart. Thus, the wilderness, which needs to be made civilized, is our heart. We are called, as the Lord is making his preparations to come, to prepare our hearts.

The "mountains" which need to be brought low refer to those plentiful areas of pride in our lives. In order for us to properly receive the Lord, we must have a sense of humility about us. Humility allows us to accurately understand our need for God and combats the pride, which blinds us to the reality of the relational barriers, which keep us from God. Only through humility can we rightly understand our need for God and proceed to call out to him from our true sense of spiritual need.

The low places, the valleys in our hearts, represent the areas of our sin that cause us shame and embarrassment. These we are called to raise up. Again, humility is required in order for this to happen. In our humility, we are able to allow our failures, and the accompanying shame of sin, to be made level. We acknowledge our inability to live up to God's laws, thus removing the shame of holding ourselves to a standard we simply have no capacity to meet. Humility is the key to us being able to perceive ourselves accurately, removing our pride while raising our shame.

As we anticipate the Lord's coming into our hearts and as we recall his arrival this Christmas, let us as a community, enter into the season of Advent with humility. It is the only way for us to make our hearts highways suitable for the glory of the Lord's presence.

As we humble ourselves this Advent season, I pray and trust that we will indeed see the glory of the Lord inhabiting the very wilderness of our hearts.

I look forward to being with you this Advent.

By Grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Jones".

Kevin Jones



**VESTRY MEMBERS  
2008**

**Tina Mediate  
Senior Warden**

**Marcus York  
Junior Warden**

**Gary Benson  
Maria Black  
John chase  
Debbie Ebia  
Mike Evers  
Jack Fritz**

**Penny Hoffman  
Theresa Miller  
Cara Nicholls  
Randy Stout**

Please pray  
daily for our  
Vestry  
members and  
for their  
ministry to St.  
Peter's.

THE VESTRY  
MEETS ON THE  
4TH TUESDAY  
OF THE MONTH



**FROM THE VESTRY . . .**

*The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.*

**Eric Hoffer**

The other day, I was having the stereotypical "bad day at the office." I was behind on a couple of projects, over budget on another, and wondering how I would get everything finished. For no reason other than answered prayer, I was hit by the thought that I'm very blessed to have a job that I like, particularly in light of current economic conditions. Many folks are currently out of work, or have a job that is in jeopardy. Taking that thought a little bit further, I feel so blessed to be a member of the St. Peter's congregation. Due to the good stewardship of current and past members, our building is solid, and we have the resources to help those who need a hand up, while still keeping the doors open and the lights on for our own worship. Further, and more importantly, I am grateful for ministerial leadership, both present and past, that has kept us focused on scripture, mission outreach, and buffered us from the foibles of the national church.

So, as we move all too rapidly toward the Christmas celebration, take time for gratitude. We're all incredibly blessed, even when it's not apparent to us.

~~Mike Evers

*"Each Man should give what he has decided in his heart to give,  
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2Cor 9:7)*

My recent assignment at Jodi's Heart Inc. was to see if there would be a donor to gift us with seven turkeys for our 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Thanksgiving Feast. I knew our very small start-up budget; so prayerfully I called on Fr. Kevin and asked if he could help with the turkeys and the food needed for such an event. Cheerfully he said, "Of course, stop down and I will help out." Then out of his mouth fell the words, "What if you bring a list to Shannon and we will ask the congregation to supply your needs?!"

The list was quickly compiled and e-mailed to Shannon. We had time for three Sundays to post the list in the bulletin. On that day when we gathered the mounds of items in the office, one last soul arrived with yet another turkey and more food fixin's! Shannon advised me one family had gifted us with extra money, and Gail produced the check for me. It was the most fun unloading our truck at the Center with turkeys, sugar, flour, potatoes, pie crusts, pie fillings, corn, sweet potatoes, oysters, butter, bread, and spices. With each item we could all feel the love enclosed!

When all was said and done, the money covered the few missing items on the list and bought us disposable plates, utensils, and cups! We were blessed; AND 85 people were fed in the dining room, conference rooms, offices and the computer lab!!!

**THANK YOU, ST. PETER'S. YOU ARE AWESOME AND FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!**

*Georgia Huckleby, Community Development  
Jodi's Heart Inc.*

*Committed to enriching the Lives of People With Special Needs*

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good thing he planned for us long ago.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

For the past two weeks at youth group we have been studying Ephesians, and last night we had a great discussion on chapter 2. I bet you are wondering how you hold a teenager’s attention for an hour-long bible study? Yea . . . I was asking the same question after the first week. A hand-full of loud grumblers said something like, “Are you serious? A whole chapter every week for the next two months? I’ll come back when we’re done with that.”

So, Father Kevin came up with a great idea to have a drawing to win a gift card from Wal-Mart to convey the idea of God’s grace. This was brilliant! None of them deserve a free gift card for anything and the same goes for you. If you are paying attention I’ll offer the same to you from Father Kevin. At the end of this article, if you follow the directions, you, too, will have the chance to win a fifty-dollar gift card to Wal-Mart. This is great for this Christmas season with all your families coming to dinner or maybe your kids need a new shovel for the winter season. Whatever you would choose, it would just be nice to receive a gift for free. Well . . . that’s what the kids thought.

Contrary to many other faiths and our culture’s perspective, there is nothing we can do to earn our “spot” in heaven. This Christmas you cannot give enough presents, send out enough cards, make enough cookies for the office (although St. Peter’s office could use some Christmas cookies). As it says in verse 8, God saved you by his grace when you believed. When you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died for your sins and was raised from the dead, then you are saved by his amazing grace! We are not good enough nor can we be good enough to earn salvation on our own. We need a savior, Jesus Christ our Lord!

Some of you might be thinking, “Hey what is wrong with baking cookies for St. Peter’s youth group, buying extra presents for children and donating my time for those in need?” I would say these are great examples of showing your Christianity (especially the baking cookies part). Just remember that God wants to spend the rest of eternity with you because he loves you and there is nothing you can do to earn it because that “Life” is a gift.

This is similar to giving our students a free gift card. There was nothing they did to earn it; in fact, it can feel almost frivolous. Here are your directions: if you are the third person to e-mail Kevin with the words exactly as written in parenthesis of (Ephesians 2 Gift Card winner am I?) in the subject line you too can receive your gift card.

Merry Christmas!  
AnDy

**Children’s Christmas Pageant Practice  
and  
Wassail Party for Everyone**

Parents, please bring your children for practice in the parish hall on December 20th at 3:30. Following practice, at about 5:00, everyone is invited to enjoy wassail and chili.

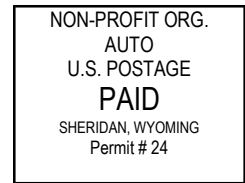
**Come One, Come All!**

Jr. EYC meets at 7 P.M. Wednesdays  
&  
Sr. EYC meets at 7 P.M. Sundays  
in the Parish Hall basement.

~  
For more information, contact Andy Menth at 674-7655.

**ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
ONE SOUTH TSCHIRGI STREET  
SHERIDAN, WY 82801**

**Return Service Requested**



**St. Margaret's Guild** will be hosting its annual Christmas party at 7:00 P.M. on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, at the home of Linda Ernst (1020 South Thurmond Street). There will be a \$5 gift exchange and wonderful fellowship. Anyone who is not a member of the Guild but would like to attend is welcome.

**BITS FROM BERT . . .**

During Advent, as well as on Christmas Eve at our first service, the St. Peter's Children's Choir will be singing. With their enthusiasm, joy, and energy it has been a joy to already begin practices during the regular Sunday 10:00 A.M. "7-Up Club" time. Along with Fritz, our accompanist, and Theo's guidance, we will be setting up two extra times for Christmas. Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30 P.M. (followed by a Wassail party at 5:00 P.M.) and Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, at 9:00 A.M. More details will be mailed to you all. We do encourage your children to attend the regular Sunday 10:00 A.M. times. All children are welcome, regardless of how often they can practice. We look forward to their voices each time!

Sister Loretta has invited us to attend St. Dennis' Parish Bazaar at Crow Agency, Montana, on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> (10- 6) and Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 10-2 (with food available both days). There are lots of crafts, handmade items, baked goods, and Native American craftings. Please contact me if you are interested in getting a group together to attend their bazaar.

Finally, in all the hustle and bustle that this time of year brings, I personally wish you and yours peace, joy, and His love. It's sometimes easy to lose the true Reason for the Season (Note: reminder to myself too)!

FHS,

Roberta "Bert" Thompson  
674-8578  
robrick@fiberpipe.net